



Info@starklawlibrary.org

Stark County Law Library Association

September 2005

BEGINNERS

www.CourthouseForum.org

**The email address,
info@starklaw
library.org really
works! TRY IT!!**

“The courthouse is where lives and fortunes are changed ‘by the stroke of a pen.’ Each year the nation’s judges decide hundreds of thousands of cases, most of which receive no public attention, discussion or scrutiny.”¹

Courthouse Forum located at: <http://www.courthouseforum.com/index.php> on the Web, was launched on August 1st, and “aims to be a one-stop shop in which to monitor, discuss and evaluate all of the nation’s federal and state courts and judges. The site is built around a complex structure of separate forums for each jurisdiction and venue in the United States. The site’s founders intend that attorneys, judges, litigants and the public will use these forums to post candid comments, information and opinions about the nation’s courts, judges, judicial nominees and cases.”²

The home page is a VERY busy place with links to the forums for all federal, state and territory courts, and one layer down I found a complete listing of county courts. There are also a bountiful listing of popular news, law and blog links and an extensive section of links for First Time Visitors. With just a little mousing around I found a list of 54

cities, towns, boroughs and communities within Stark county! Would you be able to name even half???

So far, the site houses more than 500,000 forum categories. Eventually, it will include more than 650,000. There are forums for every court and judge in the federal judiciary, as well as forums for federal judicial nominees (here is the forum for John Roberts) and federal appellate court opinions. There are forums for every state appellate court and state appellate judge, and forums for state appellate court opinions. There are forums for virtually every venue, trial court and trial judge in 26 states and the District of Columbia, with plans to add the remaining states over the coming months.³

If they do not yet have a forum for a court or judge that you wish to discuss, just leave a message for them and they will expedite opening the forum.

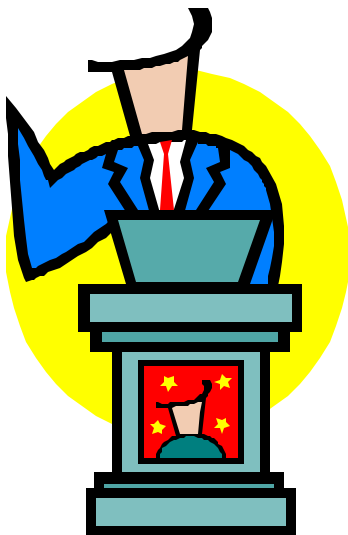
Messages can be posted either in standard message-board format or in blog format, and there is a lot of help available in the FAQ section and the links for First Time Visitors. But they advise that you read their Rules and Guidelines, Terms and Conditions, Anonymity Policy, and Privacy Policy, before using the forums.

BEGINNER (CONTINUED)

CourthouseForum.org

Though it has grown a LOT since its opening just two weeks ago, many of the forums, including Ohio, have few or no message-board posts and no blogs that I could find at this

time. “This makes it difficult to evaluate the site. But the idea behind it is ambitious and it will be interesting to watch how it develops.”⁴



INTERMEDIATE

PowerPoint

PowerPoint has been around for a long time and we have all been bored to death by a lecturer who reads us slides. But used properly PowerPoint can be a great asset to your trial and mediation skills and is well suited for use in arbitration, and presentations to clients and at firm meetings.

The typical juror, judge or mediator increasingly wants to **see** the points the trial attorney is making, rather than simply hearing them. Years of conditioning by the news and print media have trained us to rely on visual images in our quest to understand information. PowerPoint, a versatile presentation software program sold by Microsoft, is moving onto laptop computers and into the hands of trial attorneys in order to inform and persuade the trier of fact.⁵

This month's Law Practice Today contains a great article by Dennis Kennedy and Tom Mighell called “Powerful Pointers for Presenters.” You will find it on the

Web at: <<http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/articles/slc08051.html#>>. It contains an extensive list of resources to improve your presentations including, “The Basics,” “Presentation Resources,” “Communicate Using Technology,” “Advanced Resources,” plus a link <<http://www.sethgodin.com/freeprize/reallybad-1.pdf>> to Seth Godin's five rules to creating amazing presentations, and another link <<http://www.brainybetty.com>> to Brainy Betty's website, (Go to the main menu <<http://www.brainybetty.com/sitemap.htm>> for the full impact of her offerings and don't forget to visit her blog for more tips, techniques, templates and tutorials).

Another resource not mentioned in the above article is Cliff Atkinson's blog, aptly named “Beyond Bullets: People Communicating with People” at <http://sociablemedia.typepad.com/beyond_bullets/>. Cliff doesn't deal solely with PowerPoint, but his entries usually contain a real gem!

INTERMEDIATE

PowerPoint (Continued)

If you are reading the paper version of this article and cannot access the links, the following are a few of the ways you might use PowerPoint in mediation:

- Color photographs of the plaintiff
- Photographs of the equipment needed to provide care to the plaintiff
- Key points to cover in an opening or closing argument
- Points from the expert witness's publications, which contradict testimony or written opinion
- Photographs, maps or diagrams of the accident site
- Pieces of evidence

ADVANCED

Podcasting Problems

Fortunately, as of this writing, the bad guys haven't moved into podcasting! But use good podcatcher software to make sure you are as safe as possible from future attacks.

Now that you have sampled a few podcasts and know what we are talking about, I'm going to concentrate on a few problems you should be aware of and the steps you can take to prevent them.

First, let me say that the rate at which podcasts are growing is phenomenal! The Wikipedia reports that last year, on September 28th, "Google showed only 24 hits on the search term podcasts."⁶ Now there are 13,700,000 hits.⁷

Second, a little history lesson to get a good perspective on the topic. From Microsoft Word we got macro viruses, from Microsoft Outlook we got e-mail viruses and from Internet Explorer, Active X viruses. Makes sense that the industry would have learned to separate code from data, but have they? NO!⁸

Fortunately, as of this writing, the bad guys haven't moved into this area of the blogosphere! To make sure you are as safe as possible from future attacks, use good podcatcher software such as:

- FeedStation <<http://www.newsgator.com/BroadcastingHome.aspx>>
- Sage RSS Feeds Sidebar for Firefox <<http://sage.mozdev.org/>>
- Diodia RSS Feeds Toolbar for Internet Explorer <<http://www.diodia.com/feedstoolbar.htm>>
- Primetime Podcast Receiver <<http://www.primetimepodcast.com/blog/default.aspx>>
- Podfeeder <<http://www.podfeeder.com/download/>>

ADVANCED

Podcasting Problems (Continued)

This sampling of podcatchers will:

- 1) save all apps to disk—which lets antivirus and antispysware do its job,
 - 2) not allow executable files to run,
- and in each case the browser software will give you a security warnings when bad code is encountered.

Unfortunately there is still one way for the bad guys to get at you and that is through your media player itself—more on that next month!

FOOTNOTES

¹ Courthouse Forum: You Be the Judge. 2004-2005 Government Forums, Inc. 15 August 2005. <<http://www.courthouseforum.com/index.php>>.

²⁻⁴ Ambrogi, Robert. “New Site Offers Forums to Discuss Judges, Courts.” Robert Ambrogi’s Lawsites. 1 August 2005. Creative Commons License. 15 August 2005. <<http://www.legaline.com/2005/08/new-site-offers-forums-to-discuss.html>>.

⁵ “Power Point: A Persuasive Tool.” Our Services: Power Point. Med League Support Services, Inc. 18 August 2005. <http://www.medleague.com/Services/other/Power_Point.htm>.

⁶ “Podcasting: Popularization.” Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. 18 August 2005. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 18 August 2005. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>>.

^{7 & 8} Livingston, Brian. “Special Report: Podcasts Can Infect Your PC.” Windows Secrets Newsletter. 28 July 2005. Windows Secrets.com LLC. <<http://windowssecrets.com/comp/050728/>>.